

Goodbye, Nala

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Author: ThatPersonYouMightKnow

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Summary: Tama loses her patience with the world, and decides to wreck Simba and Nala's lives from the inside out.

***Chapter 1*: Chapter 1: The Pointlessness of Life**

AN: Here we are. The journey's end. This is where it'll all come together, folks. Heroes will fall and evil will prevail. I'm sorry to say, but it's the last story of the series. Read if you dare...

Goodbye, Nala

Chapter One: The Pointlessness of Life

It was a beautiful night in the Pride Lands. For the first time in quite a long while, a full moon was out, and billions of stars twinkled brightly in the blanket of darkness known as space.

It was just a shame that no one could see it. After all, you either had to be an insomniac or a very light sleeper to be up this late to witness it. The best things always seemed to happen when no one was around to witness them. No one at all...

Well, no one except for Tama, that is.

She was still up. She was *always* up. Over the course of the past few days, Tama found that she had been sleeping less and less. She spent too much time awake and less time asleep. But she didn't care. There were important things on her mind. Important things that needed to be addressed. Important things that Tama needed to fix.

Very important things – like how her life meant nothing.

It was true. Sad, but true. Tama's life had no purpose. That was her conclusion after staying up so late. She used the late nights as thinking time. After weighing up everything, Tama knew that it wouldn't have even mattered whether she existed or not.

Her life wasn't going anywhere. First she'd been born into a magical pride, bred for the purpose of becoming an evil murderer – whose goal was only to kill and destroy everything in sight.

But she didn't want that. She wanted to be good. She didn't see any sort of redeeming qualities in an evil life. What would she gain from it? Nothing but pain. Pain and suffering. *No one* should have to live their lives like that.

Of course, Tama thought her parents would be accepting about her choice. She was far too young to know just *how* corrupted and psychopathic her mother and father really were. When she told her father, he had abused her. He beat her to an inch of her life, and then beat her some more. It was one of the most horrific experiences she had ever gone through. She still had nightmares about it – when she *did* sleep...

After that incident, Tama's parents knew that there was no way their daughter could grow up to become the cub they wanted her to be. Her siblings had more or less gone the same way – they were either drowned, or in one case ate each other.

So they banished her. Tama was glad, and accepted it without so much as a single complaint. She ran away, as fast as she could, and never looked back. Not once. She didn't *want* to.

Tama had travelled through a great many prides, searching for a home, but nothing that met her requirements presented itself. Nothing was the way she wanted it. Something just always seemed to be holding her back.

As she travelled, she became a changed person, thanks to the abusive nature of her parents. She had become miserable, self-centred, and greedy. From then on, she thought of herself as evil. She had finally become what her mother and father strived for her to be...

That was when she met Tojo. One day, Tama arrived in a pride. A pride that was in a poor condition. There was hardly any food or water, and most of the pride's lionesses were in a bad state. It certainly wasn't her idea of a home.

Then Tama discovered that the King had started a fire, and was planning on burning down the whole pride. The pride was beyond repair, and the King thought that the only viable solution was to massacre everyone. They would all burn and smoulder into nothingness, and their ash would be ground deep into the dirt.

Once Tama discovered what the King was up to, she ran away, knowing that there wasn't anything she could do. Deep down, she wanted to save them, but she knew she couldn't. It wasn't long before the entire kingdom was alight, and everyone screamed as they burnt to death.

Everyone except for Tojo, that is. By sheer luck, Tama bumped into Tojo, who, unbeknownst to her, was actually the *Prince* of the pride. He was stuck in the middle of it all, powerless to do anything. It all scared him so much. He didn't know what to do.

But then Tama rescued him, by forcing him to be her slave. She wanted him to do everything he asked of her. He agreed – mainly because he wanted to get away, but also because he wanted someone with him. He didn't like being on his own. No one should be alone...

She wore Tojo out every day, but he never stopped obeying her, no matter what she asked him to do. He was incredible. If Tama had told him to jump off a cliff, then he probably would have. It wasn't like he was just obeying to stay on her good side – it was like he was trying to make some kind of connection with her. Like he was trying to show her that he could be so much more than just a slave...

And so, once the two cubs settled into the Pride Lands, they eventually became friends. *Best* friends. Tama didn't want Tojo to be her slave any more. It was about time she did some things for herself. It was about time she discarded some of her evil ways. Tojo deserved a break. He was a good guy, and Tama sometimes felt really guilty for what she had done to him.

Everything seemed to be going great, until the two were forced to go on the run. After Tama had infected Simba with a horrific illness – known as the Kulaani illness – she feared that it wouldn't be long before the Prince of the Pride Lands figured it all out, and tried to have Tama apprehended for her horrific crime. If they were caught, then the sentence would most likely be execution.

And since then, Tama and Tojo had been reduced to living in the Outlands. Food and water was nonexistent there. It wasn't a happy home. It was one of the most miserable places Tama had ever seen. But it was what she had to deal with.

So that was when her life pretty much stopped. Day after day, it had become the same thing. Wake up, spend the whole day feeling miserable, and then go to sleep. Repeat until dead. That was all her life had become. A dead end.

All Tama could do was look up at the full moon, and think about how pointless everything was. She was going to end up all alone, with nothing. Just the dark and the cold.

Tojo would leave her in the end. She knew that, too. He would get tired of her eventually, and would leave for ever, hating her so much for ruining his life that he wouldn't even bother to say goodbye. She hated to admit it, but that broke her heart.

Nobody loved her. Nobody even *liked* her. That was her one true wish. She didn't want to control the world, or enslave the Pride Lands.

She just wanted to be loved.

Looking away from the full moon, Tama turned her attention to the ground, as tears formed in her eyes. *It's not fair*, she thought. *It's not fair...*

"You okay, Tama?" asked a voice.

Startled a little, Tama backed away in fright, only to realise that it was Tojo, who was standing right beside her. "Oh. Tojo, it's you."

He smiled in response. "Who else was it gonna be?"

"I know, it's just... I didn't expect you to be up this late, that's all," said Tama, still staring at the ground, unable to mask the look of depression on her face.

"What are *you* doing up this late?" Tojo asked, getting closer to her. "Having trouble sleeping?"

"Something like that," Tama replied.

"You look kinda sad," Tojo observed, noticing the sad look on her face. "Did you have a nightmare?"

"I've had a lot of nightmares, Tojo," said Tama. "But I'm not still up because of something like that. It's something much more serious."

"Then why don't you tell me about it?" Tojo offered, giving her a sympathetic look. He noticed how depressed Tama was looking these past few days, and knew that it took quite a lot to get her down. It had to be something serious...

"I *can't*," Tama responded. "It's... personal. It's a personal thing that I have to figure out on my own. All by myself. It's like a kind of... battle."

"Well, when you're in a battle, the only thing you can really do is fight back," Tojo told her, before giving her a little smile. "Goodnight, Tama."

"Night, Tojo," said Tama. Tojo lay on his stomach, his head resting on his paws. It wasn't long before he drifted off to sleep, leaving Tama alone with her thoughts once more.

And then she thought about what Tojo had said. *Fight back...* she mused. *Fight back...*

Suddenly, Tama had an idea. An idea that would make her life better. An idea that would drag her out of the pit of despair she had fallen into. An idea that would change everything.

An angry look appeared in her orange eyes, and Tama stared out into the distance, observing the darkened Pride Lands. "Everyone has a better life than me. They're always out there, having a great time. No one cares about me. And why should they? I'm nothing. I'm not even important." She frowned, before an evil smile spread across her face. "I'll *make* them see that I'm important."

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: Something's Coming

Chapter Two: Something's Coming

Simba was the only other person awake that night. He couldn't sleep, and he didn't particularly *want* to. He knew that as soon as he closed his eyes, he would be thrown into some kind of horrific nightmare. They were so bad that Simba sometimes thought they were real. They *felt* real.

As he lay on his side, he stared out of the den and at the full moon. The night air was cool; it wasn't like other nights, which were normally hot and stuffy, making it hard to sleep. However, tonight was different. It felt... good.

I hate this, Simba thought, a miserable frown on his face. *Can't I just go to sleep without feeling scared all the time? What does it all mean?*

"Simba?"

He recognised that soft voice instantly. It was the voice of the person who kept him strong. The person who kept him fighting. The person who he loved with all his heart.

Simba turned his head to look at Nala, who was standing up, a sad look on her face. "What is it, Nala?"

The two had met each other by accident, really. They'd practically attacked each other before they became friends! But it wasn't long before they started having amazing adventures with each other, doing all kinds of different things. Their bond strengthened with each passing day, and they eventually fell in love with each other.

He still loved her, even to this day. Every little bit of her. From head to paws. She was beautiful, and had the greatest personality. He cared for her, and wasn't going to let anything happen to her.

Nala remained rather hesitant about telling Simba why she was upset. "Well... Um..."

"Come on – you know you can tell me," Simba assured her, smiling. "What is it?"

"It's just that... I had a bad dream," Nala revealed, looking down at the floor sadly.

"Oh." Simba had to admit, he was a little bit surprised. *That makes a change*, he remarked. "Well, why don't you sit right here and tell me about it?"

Nala stared at him, and smiled. He was so kind. He really cared about her. "Thanks," she said, as she lay beside him, resting her head on his chest.

"So what happened?" Simba asked.

"You died," Nala replied, sadness evident in her tone.

"I what?" said Simba, raising his eyebrows.

"You heard me," said Nala. "You died. Right in front of me. But it was... different."

"Different?" said Simba, confused. "What do you mean?"

He noticed that Nala had tears in her eyes. "*I* did it," she replied. "You were begging me not to do it. You begged and begged for mercy, but I didn't listen. I *wanted* to hurt you. It felt so good. I tore you to pieces, and all I could think was that I enjoyed the sound of you screaming. And I loved it." She sobbed. "I'm sorry."

Simba put a paw around her, hugging her close to him. "Don't worry about it, Nala. Don't think about it. It's not real."

"But it *felt* real," Nala retorted. "It was like it wasn't even me. I felt like I wanted to kill you. What's wrong with me?"

"It's nothing," Simba assured her. "It's just a nightmare, Nala. Just a stupid nightmare. It doesn't really mean anything."

"*Your* nightmares do," said Nala, looking up at him. "What if mine do, too? What if I end up... killing you one day?"

Simba gave her a kind smile. "Come on, Nala. Do you *want* to kill me?"

She let out a little laugh. "No."

"Exactly. It's not gonna happen. Not ever. You'd never do that to me, and I'd never do that to you. It's just a crazy nightmare. Like I said – it's nothing."

Nala nuzzled his chest. "Thank you, Simba," she said. "You don't mind if I... stay here, do you?"

"Of course not," he replied. "Hug me all you want. I like it."

She sniffled. "I love you, Simba."

"I love you too."

Nala closed her eyes, hoping she would fall asleep in Simba's warm embrace.

However, Simba had a serious look on his face. The type of look he had when he knew something was wrong.

Something's not right, he thought, frowning. Things keep getting worse. First it's me having the nightmares and then it's Nala. We're being hurt. Hurt in our dreams. Like someone's trying to fight us through them. And I think I know who that someone is. Something's coming... Simba gulped nervously. *From the darkness.*

"It's time to hurt other people," said Tama, as she paced back and forth around the Outlands, the full moon illuminating her body. "I'm going to make them feel sorry for everything they've done to me. I want to be remembered. Once this is all over, no one is ever going to forget me. For years to come, they'll shudder with fear at the mention of my name. I'll be feared. And I'll like it."

An evil smile spread across Tama's face. "I'm going to wreck Simba and Nala's lives from the inside out. The future of the whole kingdom will be ruined. Everything for the Pride Lands is going to end in tragedy. If my life is nothing, then I'm going to make sure that *their* lives are nothing."

She frowned. "And then I'll kill myself," she decided. "No one will be able to punish me. I'll make my mark on the world, and then I'll end everything. This whole kingdom will be in ruins, and there's nothing they'll be able to do about it. I'll die a happy cub."

Tama turned around, and walked over to where Tojo was sleeping. He was curled up on the ground, his head resting on his paws, a little smile on his face. He was happy. He didn't know what Tama was planning to do, but he soon would.

Her plan involved him. He was going to be a key part of it. He was going to help her, whether he liked it or not.

Tama stared down at Tojo, and smiled. "I'm gonna miss you when I die," she said, before kissing him on the cheek. She lay beside him. "It'll all be over soon, though. It'll all be over..."

AN: Tama has a plan. A very deadly, heartbreaking plan that will change everything. But what is it? You'll have to find out tomorrow. Just five more chapters to go now...

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Key Part of the Plan

AN: Two more chapters to this climactic story for you. Last time we saw that Tama had an evil plan – to wreck Simba and Nala's lives! What could possibly happen next? Read all about it before I *explode*!

Chapter Three: Key Part of the Plan

When Tama opened her eyes, she discovered that she was hugging Tojo. She quickly let go of him, disgusted. *I do the stupidest things when I'm asleep*, she thought, getting to her paws. *I just hope it doesn't carry on when I go to sleep for ever.*

"Wow..." Tojo muttered in his sleep. "I never knew mermaids could be so beautiful. Of course I'll help you with your problem. I'm very good at collecting seashells to fight sharks..."

Tama couldn't help but giggle. *I think I'd better wake him up*, she told herself. *Before he gets himself into trouble with the 'mermaids'.*

She prodded Tojo a few times. "Come on, Tojo. Time to wake up from your weird dream and help me with creating my new nightmare."

Tojo's eyes flickered open, and he looked around, confused. "Huh?" he said. "What happened? Where am I? Where'd the Kingdom of Atlantis go?"

"It was all in your brain, stupid," replied Tama, pulling him to his paws. "You were just having a stupid dream. A *crazy* dream, actually. No – a *stupidly* crazy dream. That's the right way to describe it."

"But it felt so real..." said Tojo, before he shook his head frantically, waking himself up. "Why did you wake me up? These days we always sleep until the afternoon comes round. You're not planning on doing anything special today, are you?"

"As a matter of fact, I *am* planning on doing something special today," said Tama, as a smile spread across her face. "Something very special that will change our lives for the better."

Tojo raised his eyebrows, surprised. "Wow. You sound awfully cheery this morning. Compared to last night, I mean. Did you solve your personal battle?" he asked, curious.

He wished Tama would open up to him a little more. After all, he *was* her best friend. She could tell him whatever she wanted to, and he would always keep it a secret. He'd tried and tried to get through to her several times – including last night – but nothing seemed to work. She always kept her feelings bottled up inside of her. He knew that wasn't always a good thing. When you keep your feelings inside, it can make you sick.

"Not exactly," said Tama. "Let's say I'm currently in the process of *fighting* my personal battle," she said, prompting Tojo to become confused.

"Wait, what do you mean?" Tojo asked, not really understanding what she was saying. Tama could be so cryptic sometimes! First she kept all her feelings to herself, and now she was talking gibberish! "Are you talking in riddles or something?"

"No," she replied. "I was thinking about what you said to me last night. You said that I should fight back. And that's exactly what I'm going to do. I have it all planned out. Every last detail. And it only took me half an hour!"

"I'm still not getting you," said Tojo, narrowing his eyes and shaking his head. "You have it all planned out? What do you mean by that?" His eyes darted left and right, as a nervous look appeared on his face. "You haven't started a war, have you?"

"Not exactly," Tama responded, turning away from him. "You see, Tojo, over the past few days you may have realised how depressed I've been looking. Actually, that's wrong. You may have realised how depressed I've been *feeling*."

"Well, duh!" Tojo exclaimed. "It doesn't take a genius like me to figure that out. For the past few days, you've been looking like your best friend's just died! I think I've even caught you *crying* a couple of times. And that's just not like you." He thought for a moment. "Or is it?"

"As I was saying," Tama carried on. "I've been thinking a lot about our lives and where they're leading us. And I finally came to a conclusion: nowhere. Our lives are going *nowhere*, Tojo. We're stuck at a dead end. A dead end that – if we

don't change our ways – we'll be stuck at for ever. Do you understand now?"

"Um... kinda," replied Tojo, scratching his head, still not really getting it. "You want us to change our lifestyle? Kind of like... eating healthier food or something? I hear grass is quite nutritional around these parts."

"No, silly. Our lives are over if we stay like this! We'll die in the dark, all alone. We won't be remembered, and we *certainly* won't be missed. No one cares about us, Tojo. So I've decided, from this day forth, that things are going to change. It's official – I'm taking drastic action."

"And what exactly do you mean by 'drastic action'?" Tojo wondered, narrowing his eyes. "Because from where I'm standing, it doesn't sound very friendly."

Tama grinned evilly. "It's *not*," she said coldly. "I'm going to make my mark on the world. I'm going to be respected. Feared! No one will ever forget me! Everyone will tremble with fear at the mere mention of my name!"

"Tama, this isn't like you," said Tojo, taking a few steps towards her. "It's like you're reverting back to your evil ways. You don't want that – do you?"

"Oh, you're not still going on about me begin good, are you?" Tama snapped, sneering at him. "Face facts, Tojo. I have a cold, black heart. The evil blood of my parents flows through my veins. I was *born* to be evil, Tojo, so why should I deny it? Give me one good reason."

"Because I believe that you *are* good," Tojo told her honestly. "I can see it in your eyes. You are a good person."

Tama scoffed. "None of that fluffy stuff is going to work on me any more! I've become the person I was destined to be! And no one – not even you – can stop me! And if you can't stop me, then you might as well join me."

Tojo stared at her with a pleading look in his eyes. He didn't want her to do this. He didn't want her to go back to her evil ways. He thought she was changing. He thought she was on the path to becoming the good cub Tojo knew she was.

Obviously, he was wrong. "Tama, I—"

"Enough!" Tama interrupted, silencing him. She held out a paw for him to shake. "Well? Are you in or are you out? I would sing a song about that, but I haven't really got the time."

Tojo stared down at her outstretched paw, considering whether to shake it or not. If he did, then he knew that he would have to do whatever Tama told him to, no matter how evil it was. And if he didn't, then he would lose the love of his life for ever.

Naturally, he shook her paw. "Fine," he grumbled, frowning. "I'm in, but I'll let you know right now that I don't like it. Not one bit."

"I don't care!" Tama shouted. "All I care about is finally making everything go the right way for me! And it's about time, too!"

"So what's your plan?" Tojo asked, knowing full well that Tama had something horrifying planned. If she'd returned to her evil roots, then he knew that whatever her plan was, it didn't involve planting trees or making new friends. It would involve damaging things, and injuring people – possibly even *killing* them.

"My plan?" Tama grinned sinisterly. "I'll tell you all about it. After all, you are a *key* part of it."

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Nothing But a Monster

Chapter Four: Nothing But a Monster

Simba stared at his reflection in the water hole. The sunlight reflected off of it, causing the water to sparkle with beauty. Yet another attractive feature of the Pride Lands. It was just another day in paradise...

Or, as Simba would have put it, another *boring* day in paradise. "It's too quiet today," he said, sighing. He wanted some action. He wanted some adventure. This was just too boring for an energetic cub like him!

Nala was in the water hole, floating lightly on her back, her eyes closed. "What are you talking about this time, Simba?" she asked, opening one eye.

"I said it's too quiet," Simba repeated. "Can you hear that?" Simba put a paw to his ear, listening out. "Nothing. That's the sound of nothing happening. It's so *boring*! Where's the hungry monsters that want to devour us? They're always around at the worst possible time, but when you *want* them they never show up! What's the deal?" He sighed. "Got any ideas, Nala?"

"I'm just trying to relax," she replied. "I'm trying to clear my mind. The water is clear, so that will help me. I'll forget all about my troubles if I just keep floating along."

"Interesting way of thinking," Simba remarked. "But I don't see how it's going to help me getting over being bored."

"Go take a nap or something," she suggested. "That'll kill off some time, won't it?"

"Nala, every time I go to sleep I have a nightmare," Simba reminded her. "Even *you* had one last night. That's the whole reason you're trying to relax in the first place."

"Don't remind me," Nala said. "I need to forget all about that nightmare, before it drives me crazy. I love you, Simba. I don't want to have to think about you dying – *especially* thinking about you dying because of *me*."

"If it makes you feel any better, I've had worse," Simba told her. "I once had a nightmare where my whole family tried to kill me – including you. Never again will I forget those evil grins and those red eyes. It's not a nice feeling when everyone you love eats you alive."

Nala chuckled. "You beat me at everything, don't you?"

"Hey, I never said that," said Simba, giving her a little smile. "I don't beat you at everything."

"Come on, Simba – admit it. You're the hero, and I'm just the scared little girl that you have to save all the time," said Nala, sighing sadly. "I'm nothing without you."

"That's not true, Nala. We're equal. You've saved my life more times than I can remember," Simba told her. He noticed the sad look on Nala's face, and frowned. "Boy, this nightmare stuff has really gotten to you, hasn't it?"

"It's just that it felt very real," Nala replied, floating over to the edge of the water hole. She rolled onto dry land, and lay right beside Simba. "I don't know. It's just affecting me more than I thought it would. I'm scared of losing you one day."

"You're not gonna lose me," Simba assured Nala, putting a paw on her shoulder. "I promise. We'll always be together."

"I've already lost you once," said Nala, as she looked down at the ground, avoiding Simba's gaze. "That whole Kulaani illness thing scared me to death. I really thought you were going to... die. That's why I wanted to marry you right then! In fact, we still technically *are* married. I don't think we have any witnesses to prove it, though."

"Okay, then, *Queen* Nala," said Simba with a smile. "Look at me right now. I look fine, don't I? I look as healthy as a piece of fruit – and I really can't believe I just said that."

"Yep," Nala agreed, looking him over. "You still look your same old, cute self. No different from usual, then."

"Which means that I'm fine," Simba concluded. "Nothing is going to happen to me. Unless you plan on suddenly tearing me to shreds, of course," he said with a little chuckle. "Actually, it's kind of the other way around. I worry a lot about losing you. Every time we get ourselves into danger. Sure, it's exciting and all, but I'm still scared that something might happen to you. I care about you more than anything else. I don't want you to get hurt."

Nala nuzzled his face. "You're right," she agreed, a smile on her face. "We'll be fine, as long as we stick together."

"Tama, this is *horrible*!" Tojo exclaimed, as the two of them headed towards the Pride Lands. "I don't want to be part of this anymore!"

"We shook paws on it," was Tama's reply. She didn't care what he said – he was going to do what she asked him to, and there would be no complaints. Well, maybe there would be a *few* complaints, but she drew the line at a *lot* of a complaints! "You have to do what I say now, Tojo. We made a deal."

"Just think about it!" Tojo pleaded. "Think about what you're doing. It's eviller than evil itself! You're trying to wreck the lives of innocent people – innocent people who've done you no harm at all!"

Tama stopped dead in her tracks, turning to face Tojo. "No harm at all?" she exclaimed. "Ha! Simba and Nala have caused me nothing but pain! It's *their* fault that my life was wrecked in the first place! I wish I'd never met them! I should have just left them stuck in each other's bodies for the rest of their lives!"

"But *you're* the one who gave Simba the Kulaani illness," Tojo reminded her. "Face it, Tama – it's your fault. Own up to your actions for once. Stop trying to blame other people. You're better than that!" Tojo raised an eyebrow. "Or *are* you? I don't really know any more."

"And how come *you're* so high and mighty all of a sudden?" Tama retorted angrily. "You're the one who deserted your entire pride and let them burn to death!"

"There's nothing I could do about it," Tojo said quietly, hurt by Tama's cruel words. "You know that."

"All I know is that you're a coward!" Tama insulted. "It may have escaped your notice, *kid*, but you'd be nothing without me. I gave you a chance to start again!"

"You made me your slave!" Tojo countered.

"But I let you go!" said Tama.

"Then stop calling me *nothing*!" Tojo screamed, unable to take this any more. Tama had taken this way too far. Enough was enough. "I quit! I don't want to do this! Go and handle it *yourself*!"

Tojo turned around, and started heading in the opposite direction. "Tojo, if you go now, then you'll regret it!" Tama warned him, her insides boiling with rage.

"Just be quiet!" Tojo snapped. "You're nothing but a... a *monster*! A horrible, *evil* monster! A greedy, self-centred, unloving, malicious, awful—"

"*Shut up*!" Tama roared, lashing out with her claws and slashing Tojo across the face. He screamed as he stumbled backwards.

He put a paw to his face, and could feel blood. Lots of blood. Tama had left three deep, long claw marks in his cheek, each of them bleeding profoundly.

Tojo just stared at Tama, who was breathing deeply, seething with rage. Then, he turned around and walked away, not saying another word.

"And that's the end of that!" Tama spat, before heading in the opposite direction. "I'll take care of this all by myself! I don't need that nerdy nitwit!"

It just proves that no one cares about me, Tama thought to herself. No one cares. Not even Tojo. That selfish idiot. All he cares about is himself! I can't even believe I rescued him! I should have left him to die in the flames! I want him to die!

Tama wanted to hit the ground repeatedly in frustration, but she managed to restrain herself. *Calm down, Tama, she told herself. Once your plan is complete, you can die happy. Everything will be complete. Everything. Just focus on the plan. That's the most important thing.*

Tama continued on her journey, unaware that she had lost what was *really* the most important thing in her life.

AN: Whoa... that was pretty mean, wasn't it? Pretty... sad. Pretty... depressing. Would this be a bad time to mention that it's only going to get worse? I bet you're biting your nails in anticipation, wondering about what's going to happen next! But you can hold out for another twenty-four hours, can't you? Unless, of course, you keep biting your nails, and then bite

your fingers off... then your arm... and then eventually your head. Um... better make that *twelve* hours, actually.

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: Not So Quiet Any More

AN: I've gotta admit, these next two chapters aren't for the faint of heart. You've been warned. That's all I'm saying.

Chapter Five: Not So Quiet Any More

Sarafina was alone on the edge of Pride Rock, just watching the day pass her by. None of the lionesses were hunting today. It was pretty quiet, so King Mufasa had been generous enough to give them all the day off.

So, she decided that she just wanted some time all to herself. Some peaceful thinking time. She was the only person around – all of the other lionesses were off chatting with each other. Nala had gone off to spend the day with Simba – no different from usual – and everything was silent. It was the most peaceful day she'd ever had...

Well, until she'd noticed that Tama was standing right beside her. "Hello, there," she greeted her cheerily.

Sarafina raised an eyebrow at her. "Can I help you?" she asked, instantly noticing that Tama had a very malicious glint in her orange eyes. It was almost as if she was up to something. Something *sinister*...

"Actually, you *can* help me," replied Tama. "You're Nala's mother, aren't you?"

Sarafina nodded. "Yes. Why?"

Tama smiled. "Good. You see, I kind of need you to do me a big, *big* favour. And if you do it, then I'll try not to cause too much trouble. I think that sounds fair enough. Don't you?"

"What are you talking about?" Sarafina asked, narrowing her eyes. "What exactly is it that you want from me?"

"Well, your daughter has become a constant annoyance to me. She seems to be having the greatest life going for her right now, and I have the complete opposite. So, my proposition is this: I would like you to tell Nala that you're moving to a new pride, and that you will never return here ever again. Then, bring her to me, and I'll handle all the rest."

Sarafina scoffed. "This is a joke – right?" she said, feeling a little uneasy. She could practically *feel* the anger and fury radiating from Tama. "If you think I'd do something as ridiculous as that, then you're crazy!"

"I'm not crazy," Tama told her. "Just very messed up. That's what happens when you wake up one morning and you realise that your whole life has been worth nothing. I'll give you one more chance to agree to my proposal, otherwise I'll have to resort to other methods. And trust me – you *don't* want that."

"Forget it!" Sarafina spat. "I'd *never* endanger my cub! And if you go near her, then I'll make you wish you'd never been born. You're just a little brat – what could you possibly do to me?"

"If you don't accept, then I'm afraid I'll have to kill you," said Tama casually.

Sarafina couldn't help but gasp. "You... You wouldn't do that!" she exclaimed, unable to believe how psychotic Tama was. She was *insane*!

Tama stared into her eyes, and then smiled. "You're right. I wouldn't. At least, not *yet*. I need you for my plan. You're a very key part of it. I need you and Nala to leave the Pride Lands for ever. But if you won't do it *willingly*, then I'll just have to force you into doing it."

Sarafina rolled her eyes at that. "Oh, sure," she said sarcastically. "And how exactly do you plan on 'forcing' me into doing what you want?"

"It's actually pretty simple," Tama replied, lifting up one of her front paws, extending her claws and examining them. "It just so happens that I'm a very special cub – *very* special indeed – which means I have certain... abilities. And one of those abilities is the power to make you do everything I tell you to."

"I'll *never* listen to you," Sarafina told her firmly.

Tama's smile only seemed to widen. "Oh... I think you will." With that, Tama placed her paw on top of Sarafina's head.

The result was instantaneous. Her eyes shrunk down to small dots, and a blank expression appeared on her face. Nala's mother was now completely under her control, and there was nothing she could do about it. Tama's plan was finally coming together...

Tama chuckled evilly. "That's better," she said, enjoying seeing Sarafina in her power. "I've never seen someone complain so much. Now I know where Nala gets it from. But it's okay, now. You've become totally obedient to me, haven't you?"

Sarafina's expression remained blank and motionless. "Hello?" Tama waved a paw in front of her face, to no avail. "Hello?" Tama then smiled. "Oh, that's right – you can't say anything unless I tell you to. Isn't that right?" She then giggled. "Whoops. There I go again." A cruel grin spread across her face. "Say you're pathetic."

"I am pathetic," Sarafina said in a hypnotic voice.

Tama laughed. "Oh, I just *love* it when I hear people say that. It makes me feel better than them. Say that I'm better than you in every way!" she commanded.

"You are better than me in every way," Sarafina told her, in the same zombie-like tone.

"Good," said Tama, satisfied. "Sarafina, listen up and listen good. You are going to do everything I say."

"I am going to do everything you say."

"So, here's my first command: once Nala arrives at Pride Rock – which she *will* – you are going to take her away from the Pride Lands, telling her that you no longer wish to stay here any more. You will not listen to her, and you will make her obey you. Once you're out of the Pride Lands, you will bring Nala to the flatlands on the outskirts of the kingdom. That's where *I'll* be. Once you've given Nala to me, you are going to throw yourself into the nearest wildebeest stampede, ending your miserable existence. Am I making myself clear?"

"Your wish is my command, Tama," Sarafina obeyed. "I will bring Nala to you, and then end my existence."

"End your *miserable* existence," Tama corrected her, frowning.

"I will end my *miserable* existence," said Sarafina.

"Very good," said Tama, smiling. "You will remain in this trance for thirty seconds. That sounds like enough time for me to escape. Once you snap out of it, you will obey all of the commands I have given you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Tama. I obey."

Tama took her paw away from Sarafina's head, and then walked away from Pride Rock. *Everything's falling into place*, she thought. *Nala will be brought to me, and that's when the fun is going to begin.*

Tama laughed evilly as she headed in the direction of the flatlands, where one of the most crucial parts of her plan would take place.

Sarafina blinked a few times, and then looked around, feeling very dizzy and confused. *What happened?* she asked herself. *I guess I must have zoned out for a few minutes.*

She turned around to view the whole of the Pride Lands, and a frown slowly spread across her face. *I hate the Pride Lands*, she thought, feeling disgusted just to be there. *It's so bright and colourful and pretty. I hate stuff like that! And the people... Don't even get me started on them!*

Sarafina rose to her paws, having made her mind up in a split second. "I don't want to live like this any more. I'm moving out, and I'm taking Nala with me. We're better off living in the Outlands than here! As soon as Nala gets here, we're leaving! I never want to be here about the Pride Lands *again!*"

Right on cue, Simba and Nala walked by, happily talking to each other. Sarafina turned around and headed over to them, grabbing Nala by the shoulder, scaring her.

Nala screamed, but soon calmed down once she realised it was only her mother who had grabbed her. "Oh. Mom, it's just you. What do you want?" she asked, smiling up at her.

"We're leaving, Nala," Sarafina told her firmly, before pulling her away. "Come on. We have to go now."

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" Nala exclaimed, pulling herself away from her mother. "Mom, what are you talking about? Where are we going?"

"Anywhere but here," Sarafina replied. "I've had enough of the Pride Lands. I no longer wish to stay here."

"*What?*" Nala shouted, her eyes widening in shock. "Mom, what are you talking about?"

"You *know* what I'm talking about, Nala!" Sarafina snapped angrily, resisting the urge to strike her cub across the face for disobeying her instructions. "We're moving to another pride, far away from here. I don't want to hear any complaints – you're not going to change my mind."

Simba smiled awkwardly. "You're kidding, right?" he said, unable to believe that Nala's mother would suddenly decide to just leave the Pride Lands. That wasn't like her. "Tell me you're kidding."

"Stay out of this, Simba!" Sarafina raged, her eyes burning with anger. "You're one of the *worst* problems about living here! You're nothing but a childish nuisance!"

"Mom, don't you *dare* say something like that about him!" Nala argued, staring at her mother with hard eyes. "He's done more for me than you have!"

"Why, you little brat!" Sarafina screamed, before slashing Nala across the face with her sharp claws.

Nala cried out in pain, falling onto her back. Simba's eyes widened, before an angry look appeared on his face, and he leapt at Sarafina, desperate to save Nala from suffering any more abuse.

Sarafina dodged Simba with ease, before quickly picking him up and throwing him violently to the ground. He tumbled around several times, grunting in pain, and he just lay there, motionless.

Nala had tears in her eyes, as she stared up her mother, totally shocked. "Mom – you've hurt him!" she cried.

"Good!" Sarafina spat, before grabbing Nala and placing her on her back. "Now stay there, or those cuts on your face won't be the only ones. We're getting out of here."

Sarafina strode away, not sparing a single glance for the unconscious Simba. Nala turned around and stared at his still body, before breaking down in tears.

"Stop crying!" Sarafina ordered. "Or I'll knock you out!"

"Mom, why are you being like this?" Nala asked, unable to believe that her mother was acting in this cruel way. It was like she had become a completely different person!

"Because I've been too soft on you," she replied. "*Far* too soft. I've been letting you run around with that pathetic excuse for a life form. What kind of a parent am I? A *bad* one. It's time I changed my ways. Started over again. I'm going to make everything better, Nala."

"No, you're not!" Nala screamed. "You're making everything *worse*! We were happy in the Pride Lands! The only time when you *were* an awful parent is *now*!"

Sarafina gasped, and stopped dead in her tracks. "Well, if you feel that way, then I guess I'll just have to give you away."

Nala's eyes widened in horror. "What are you saying?"

"I'm disowning you, Nala," Sarafina explained. "As far as I'm concerned, you are no longer my daughter."

"You... You can't do that!" Nala argued, as tears streamed down her cheeks.

"I never really wanted you," Sarafina revealed. "You were unplanned. Just a mistake, that's all. A stupid mistake. But now I can finally rid myself of you, and I can get on with my life. To be honest, you're *nothing* to me, Nala. *Nothing*."

***Chapter 6*: Chapter 6: Poor, Pathetic Little Nala**

Chapter Six: Poor, Pathetic Little Nala

Nala tried to get off her mother's back, but Sarafina was quick to stop her, putting her claws to her cub's throat. "If you try to get away, then I will tear your throat open," she threatened.

"You wouldn't do that to me!" Nala argued. "I'm your cub!"

"You *were* my cub," Sarafina retorted. "I disowned you – remember? I can do whatever I like to you, and I won't care one little bit. Now stay on my back, or you'll be *very* sorry."

Nala reluctantly climbed onto her mother's back. Sarafina made sure she was staying put, and then carried on walking. They were nearly out of the Pride Lands now. It wouldn't be long before the two arrived at the flatlands, and that was when Sarafina would hand her cub over to the first person she saw. She didn't even care if it was a buzzard – she just wanted to get rid of her!

"Where are you taking me?" Nala demanded, wondering what her mother had planned for her. She had a feeling that it would be something horrible...

"To the flatlands," Sarafina responded. "I'm sure there are a few buzzards around who will be happy to take you off my paws."

Nala gasped, her eyes widening in horror. *She's gonna have me killed*, she realised, as her heart began to beat faster and faster. If she stuck with her mother then she was dead, and if she tried to leave then she was dead. No matter what she did, she was dead. Dead, dead, dead!

She thought of risking it for a moment, but then decided not to. Maybe her mother would just drop her off and then leave, allowing her to escape back to the Pride Lands, where she'd never see her mother again...

But was that what she really wanted? Her father was already dead – did she want to lose her mother as well? Not really, no. But what other choice did she have? Her mother obviously wasn't interested in having a cub any more, so what else could she do?

"Here we are," Sarafina announced, as the two arrived at the desert-like flatlands, which were right on the outskirts of the Pride Lands. The area separated the Pride Lands and the jungle from each other. You had to cross through the flatlands to get to the Pride Lands, and vice versa.

It was rare that anyone ever stayed in the flatlands for long. The intense heat could make a grown lion collapse to the ground in just a few hours, and buzzards would pick him clean by the end of the day, leaving only a rotting carcass behind.

"What now?" Nala asked.

"You'll see," Sarafina replied, as she stared ahead. It was like she was *waiting* for someone...

And then, Nala noticed that someone was making their way towards the two of them. Someone very small... As the person got closer, Nala realised that it was a cub! Why was a *cub* approaching them?

As soon as Nala realised who it was, she gasped.

"Well done, Sarafina," Tama told her obedient slave. "I knew I could rely on you. After all, you *are* under my control."

"I will always obey you, Tama," Sarafina told her, suddenly speaking in a hypnotic tone, surprising Nala.

"Mom?" Nala exclaimed, before turning to look at Tama. "Tama, what have you done to her? I knew it was strange that my mother just suddenly decided to leave the Pride Lands! This is all your fault, isn't it?"

Tama clapped her front paws together. "Well done, Nala. Well done. You've figured it out. I hypnotised your mother into doing whatever I asked her to. I told her to bring you to me."

"That's it?" said Nala, frowning. "You hypnotised my Mom just so she would bring you to me?"

"Well... not *exactly*," she replied, as an evil smile spread across her face. "You see, I kind of told her to do something else. Something that you'll actually find quite disturbing. I told your mother to kill herself after she brought you to me."

Nala's eyes widened in horror. "No!" she cried. "You can't do that!"

"It's hypnosis, Nala. Your mother is totally in my power, and will only listen to me, and me *only*," Tama explained. "If you try to stop her from killing herself, then she'll just kill *you*. But I know you won't try to stop her."

"And what makes you think that?" Nala argued, glaring at Tama angrily.

"You won't be awake," she replied, before picking up the nearest rock on the ground and smashing it down on the top of Nala's head. She slumped to the ground, knocked out instantly. "There we go," she said, dropping the rock. "That's one problem taken care of."

"I will go and end my miserable existence," Sarafina announced, before turning around and heading back towards the Pride Lands, ready to jump into the nearest wildebeest stampede, which would almost certainly kill her.

"Thanks for your help!" Tama called after Sarafina as she walked away. She then looked down at Nala, who lay on the ground, completely motionless. "You're a very lucky person, Nala. I could just leave you to die out here. I'm sure the buzzards would have pecked you clean by tonight, but I'm trying to make this as entertaining as possible. I'll be dead by the end of the evening, so I want to make the most of things."

Tama picked Nala up, and placed her across her back, before walking in the direction of the Pride Lands. "Don't worry, Nala," she told her. "You still get to stay alive – for a few more hours, I mean."

Tama started laughing evilly, her cackles echoing across the land. Her plan was so very close to an end. There were only a few more things left to do before it all ended...

"Simba!" Sarabi cried, her eyes widening in surprise when she found her son was lying unconscious on the ground. She nudged him a few times, fearing the worst. "Wake up!"

Simba moaned a little. "Ow..." he said, his eyes flickering open. "Where am I?" He turned his head to the side, and smiled when he saw his mother staring down at him. "Mom?"

"It's okay, Simba," Sarabi assured him. "I'm here. What happened to you? Why were you lying on the ground? Where's Nala?"

"One question at a time, Mom," Simba muttered, slowly getting to his paws. He looked himself over, hopping from left to right. "I'm okay," he concluded. "Aside from my bruised ego."

"But what happened to you?" Sarabi asked, concerned. It wasn't exactly normal to find Simba unconscious on the ground. Obviously something serious had happened. "Did someone do this to you?"

"It wasn't Nala, if that's what you're thinking," Simba replied, rubbing the back of his head with a paw. He then gasped, realising something. "Nala!" he exclaimed. "I've got to help her!"

Simba started to run, only for Sarabi to block his path. "Simba, what's going on? You need to tell me."

Simba looked up at her, and nodded. "Okay, okay. Well, it was weird. You see, earlier, me and Nala came up here. But her mother was there, and then she tried to take her away. She said that she didn't want to live in the kingdom any more, or something like that. Anyway, when Nala tried argued with her, she slashed her in the face, and then knocked me out!"

Sarabi blinked a few times in response, her mind struggling to process what had just happened. "Sarafina did this?" she said, as her eyes widened in surprise. "That doesn't sound like her. She always told me that she loved it here. Why would she lie like that to her best friend?"

"I don't know," Simba admitted, suddenly feeling very confused. "It's kinda confusing, huh?" he said, as he began to fiddle with his tuft – the standard procedure for when he became confused.

Sarabi thought for a moment. "We have to find Sarafina," she decided. "Before she does any more harm."

"Then you won't have to look very far," said a solemn voice from behind them.

Simba and Sarabi turned their heads in the direction of the voice, and gasped.

King Mufasa and two lionesses were gently lowering a motionless body to the floor. As Simba and Sarabi walked towards it, they soon realised that it was the body of Sarafina.

Her eyes were closed, and she lay there, completely still. There were cuts and bruises all over her body, and her fur was matted with dark red patches of blood. A dark pool of crimson began to seep out from underneath her.

Sarabi's eyes widened in horror. "No," she said, astounded. "Please... tell me she's not dead."

King Mufasa stared into his mate's eyes. "No. She's not dead, but she's very seriously injured."

"Dad... what happened?" Simba asked, equally as horrified as her mother. "How did she end up like this?"

"While I was patrolling I found her lying in the middle of the gorge. She must have got caught up in a stampede," Mufasa concluded, frowning as he stared down at Sarafina's unconscious body. "She would have died if I hadn't found her."

"Can we make her better?" Sarabi asked, a desperate, pleading look in her eyes. She didn't want to lose her best friend. She didn't think *anyone* would want that.

"She's going to need all the help she can get," Mufasa replied. "She'll be okay if we all do our best."

Simba slowly backed away from everyone, knowing that he had to get out of here. He had to find Nala. It had become quite clear to him right now that someone was causing all this. They'd stuck Sarafina right in the middle of a stampede and then they'd taken Nala. Somehow, they'd *forced* Sarafina into acting like that. They'd threatened her with something so terrible that she had to accept.

Simba was sure of it. And as he ran away from Pride Rock, he was also sure that he didn't have much time.

He was right.

Nala's eyes snapped open. She quickly looked around, and found that she was on the top of a cliff. *What the heck?* she exclaimed, as she slowly got to her paws, circling around the place.

It was a pretty large cliff, deep in a secluded area of the Pride Lands. Nala turned away from the edge, and could see a lot of trees, which seemed to stretch on for ever. *Where am I?* she asked herself, her eyes narrowing. *I've never been around this part of the kingdom before.*

"Confused, Nala?" said a voice from beside her. "I think I may be able to shed some light on the situation."

Nala gasped, and turned to the side to see Tama, who was staring at her, a sinister smile on her face.

On instinct, Nala lashed out with her claws. However, Tama dodged her and pinned Nala to the ground, before hopping off of her. "I suggest you don't try to fight back," Tama advised. "Otherwise you'll make things far worse than they already are."

"What are you talking about?" Nala asked. "First you hypnotise my mother, and then you knock me out and bring me here. What are you up to?"

"It's all quite a brilliant plan, really," Tama replied. "I'm going to wreck your life – what's left of it, anyway."

"So this is just a plan to make me suffer?" said Nala, glaring at her angrily.

"Not exactly. This may come as a surprise to you, but I'm more concerned about ruining *Simba's* life than yours, actually."

"But why?" Nala asked.

"Because he has such a perfect life!" Tama snapped angrily. "Everything for him is happy! He's the future King of the Pride Lands! He has you! He has everything anyone could ever ask for! But me? I have nothing. *Nothing!* Do you have any idea, Nala, do you have any idea what it's like to know that you're nothing? All my life I've just been abused and tortured. I've never met a single person who's ever loved me. And it breaks my heart. I've had enough of it. *I've had enough!*"

Her cry echoed into the air. Nala's eyes darted left and right. "So what's this plan of yours?"

"My plan is simple: I'm going to drain your energy, Nala," Tama revealed. "All of your energy until you're on the edge of death, slowly suffering as you fall into an eternal sleep. Simba will find you, I'll jump at him from out of nowhere, and I'll kill him. Then you'll die, and I can jump from the edge of this cliff, ending my suffering."

"You'll kill yourself?" said Nala, surprised. "Why would you do that?"

"I don't want anything else, Nala," Tama answered. "I think I've lived too long, anyway. It's about time I had some peace."

"You sure about that?"

"Yes. I'm *very* sure." Tama looked down at Nala, and sighed. "Goodbye, Nala," she said, before grabbing her by the shoulders.

"Wait!" Nala cried.

But it was too late. Tama concentrated as hard as she could, wanting to drain every last drop of Nala's energy.

Nala could feel it. All of her energy was being drained away by Tama, and she just got weaker, and weaker, and weaker. She struggled, trying to fight back, but she was just too weak. Tama had her exactly where she wanted.

"Tama... please..." Nala pleaded. Tama didn't listen. Her pleas meant nothing to her. She would show Nala no mercy. After all, no one had ever shown *her* any mercy.

"Just be quiet, Nala," Tama instructed. "Just go to sleep. Just go... to sleep..."

Nala's eyelids began to feel heavy, and she could feel her whole body slowly lowering to the ground. Her eyes slowly closed, and she slipped away into total unconsciousness.

Tama cuddled her lifeless body, a look of mock sympathy on her face. "Oh, poor little Nala!" she exclaimed, pretending to sound upset. "Poor, pathetic little Nala!" She laughed evilly, before throwing her motionless body violently to the ground. "Now who's nothing?"

Tama turned her head towards the trees, and sat on the ground, patiently waiting for Simba to arrive. The sun was slowly beginning to set, and the afternoon faded away, to be replaced by evening. The sky was a bright orange, and Tama thought it was appropriate.

Perfect, she thought, smiling. *As the day comes to an end, so does my life.*

AN: This is *really* dark, isn't it? But, on the bright side of things (see what I did there?) the final chapter is just mere hours away from us. The final story of them all! The chapter where everything will end! Who will live? Who will die? Will Tama kill yourself? Do you *want* Tama to kill herself? Will you just explode with anticipation? Find out tomorrow, in the conclusion of Series Two!

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: The Fate of Tama

AN: This is it, everyone. You've stuck with me for thirteen stories, and here is the mighty culmination of everything. All 5000 words of it. Not as long as the last finale, but that doesn't matter, does it? If it does, then you're free to attack me with flaming torches and pitchforks. I'm sorry!

Chapter Seven: The Fate of Tama

"Nala?" Simba called as he walked through the gorge, looking all around for any sign of her. "Nala? It's me, Simba. Are you there?" He'd searched all around, and so far had come up with nothing. There was no sign of Nala anywhere. The only thing he *had* found was a lot of blood in the area where Sarafina had thrown herself into the stampede.

Who would have done this? Simba asked himself. He was sure that this was all planned. Why would Sarafina decide to suddenly move out of the Pride Lands and then get caught up in a stampede? It was so confusing! Simba didn't understand any of it, and that only made things worse. *I haven't seen anyone. Whoever it is, they obviously like to keep themselves quiet.*

Simba hopped over a large rock, and carried on walking, keeping an eye out for anything suspicious. *Why would they take Nala? Who would have the power to force Nala's mother into taking her away? She must have been threatened into doing it...*

Then, Simba realised something. *Or maybe she wasn't threatened*, he thought, his eyes widening. *Maybe someone was controlling her. Like... someone had hypnotised her into doing it. Me and Nala have seen stuff like that before. Hago hypnotised my Dad once. But he was magical. Who else around here has magical powers...?*

Simba thought long and hard about that last question, when suddenly, he gasped, coming to a shocking realisation. "Tama," he said, before breaking into a sprint, heading for the Outlands.

It was a crazy idea – because Simba didn't really think she was all that evil – but what other person had the power to do this? She was the only magical cub around. It just *had* to be her! Tama hypnotised Sarafina into saying all of those things. Tama made Sarafina hand over Nala to her. And now Tama was probably doing unspeakable things to her!

Tama may not have appeared that evil to Simba, but she certainly had the motive. She was very reclusive, and resided in the Pride Lands with her only friend, Tojo. She was reluctant to help Simba when everyone in the pride had disappeared. And the person behind that little incident just so happened to be the cub who Tama was betrothed to in her old pride.

Her pride was known as the Evil Lands, and that *had* to be significant. Simba presumed that the kingdom of the Evil Lands was most likely reserved for maniacs and psychos – most of whom wouldn't mind tearing the heads off of an innocent lion. So if Tama had come from there, then did that mean that she was evil, too?

But she *did* try to stop the cub who took everyone in the Pride Lands away. So had she abandoned her evil origins? Maybe. But then again, maybe not. This was just one of Simba's hunches, and at the moment it was all he had to go on.

The Outlands would be the first place Tama would go. If it turned out she had Nala, then it was Simba's duty to stop her before she did any more harm. He didn't know *why* she would want to hurt Nala, but he wasn't going to sympathise with her if she tried to.

Tojo was sat alone in the Outlands, curled up in the corner of a dark den, doing nothing. Blood trickled down his cheek, drops dripping to the floor from where Tama had struck him earlier.

Tojo had given up on her. She was right after all. She was evil. A monster. Why didn't he just listen to her before? Why didn't he just let her get on with her evil schemes and plots? Instead, he chose to try and make her better – quite a challenging task – but it didn't work. Tama just stayed the same. She just wanted to hurt people – *kill* them, even.

He'd wasted months trying to change her, and it was all for nothing. Tama slashing him across the face with her claws had pretty much proved that. She'd hurt her own best friend. Well, her *former* best friend.

Tojo didn't want anything to do with Tama any more. She could do whatever she wanted to. He meant it. He never wanted to see her ever again. He never wanted to see her pretty face, or gaze into her beautiful eyes...

"Hello?" a loud voice called from outside. "Anybody around here? If you're hiding Tama, then show yourself. I know what you're up to!"

Tojo opened his eyes. "Huh?" he said, getting to his paws and walking out of the den to see who was shouting. "What the...?"

Simba was standing there, an angry look on his face. He glanced at Tojo, and then pointed at him with a claw. "You!" he shouted, walking towards him. "You're Tama's best friend! Where is she, and what has she done with Nala?"

Tojo rolled his eyes. "What are you talking about?"

"You *know* what I'm talking about!" Simba snapped, his eyes burning with fury. "People have been hurt, and I'm not gonna let anything happen to anyone else! So, come on – where is she?"

"I don't know," Tojo replied.

"Oh, come on!" Simba exclaimed. "You're always with her! You *have* to know where she is!"

"I'm not Tama's friend any more," Tojo stated, turning away from Simba and heading back towards the den. "This conversation is over. Now leave."

"Oh, no, you don't," Simba said, jumping in front of Tojo, blocking his path. "What do you mean, you're not friends any more?"

"How can I be any clearer?" Tojo retorted. "Me and Tama are no longer friends. It's over. Finished. Am I getting through to you now?"

Simba just stared at him. "*Why?*" he persisted, wanting to know more. He had to find Nala, before she was killed. He *assumed* that she was in life-threatening danger, and that really didn't surprise him.

Tojo sighed. "Do we really have to discuss this?" he said, trying to get past Simba, who just kept standing in his way. "I've had enough trouble for one day."

"Yes, we do. Nala's life is at stake, and I think it's Tama who's taken her. Now tell me – why are you no longer friends?"

Tojo hesitated telling him for a moment, but then decided that it would be wrong of him not to say – particularly if someone's life was at risk. If he didn't tell Simba, then that would make him like Tama...

"Because she wanted to wreck your life," Tojo explained, surprising Simba. "She said to me that... her life was nothing. She's evil because... she thinks that she's nothing. So, she had this plan – she wanted to wreck your life. I don't know how, because she never explained it to me. I told her I didn't want to be part of it and... Well, I think you can guess what happened," he said, pointing to the three deep cuts on his cheek. "So, there we go. Bye-bye, friend. Can I go now?"

Tojo walked around Simba and into the den. Simba still followed him. "Wait," he said, walking alongside him. "Where would she go?"

"How would I know?" he replied.

"Because you are – I mean, *were* – her best friend," said Simba. He looked at Tojo with pleading eyes. "Please, Tojo. I need your help with this. You must know something."

"I don't know anything," Tojo stated, staring back at him. "Now I'd like you to leave. I want to be on my own."

Tojo sat down in the corner of the den, facing away from Simba, staring at the wall. He had made his message quite clear to Simba: the conversation was well and truly over.

"Tojo, I—"

"Just go," Tojo interrupted, motioning for him to leave. "I'm tired. I am so... *tired*."

Simba stared at him for a few more seconds, before turning around and leaving the den, walking back into the Outlands. He breathed in the stale air, and decided what his next move was going to be.

Well, he's not going to be any help, Simba decided, although he couldn't exactly blame Tojo for this. It wasn't his fault. This was all Tama's doing. She'd caused it all, and Simba was going to make sure that she was punished for her actions.

Come on, Simba. You've been all over the Pride Lands, he told himself. *Where would someone like Tama go?* He looked around, and then saw a huge hill across the clearing he was in. *I need a good view.*

Simba rushed over to the hill, running up it until he reached the top. When he eventually got there, his heart was pounding in his chest and he was breathing heavily, exhausted.

But, he now had a perfect view of the Pride Lands and everything else around him. "Now *this* is better!" he exclaimed, grinning. Now he stood a better chance of finding Tama.

Scanning the Outlands, Simba concluded that there was no one there – aside from him and Tojo. "Okay, so the Outlands are empty," he said. "Which means Nala must be in the Pride Lands somewhere. If not, then I guess I'll just have to try the jungle."

Simba narrowed his eyes, carefully inspecting every single area of the Pride Lands he saw. Turning his head to the left, Simba could make out a very hazy, secluded area in the distance. It was hard to see from this distance, but he could just about see that it had a lot of trees, and a tall cliff right at the end

That's a long way away, Simba thought, straining his eyes as much as he possibly could. Eventually, he could make out a figure. It was tiny – *really*, really tiny – but it was definitely a person. A small person – maybe a cub – who was standing on the edge of the cliff, looking down at the ground below.

Simba's eyes widened. *I think that's Tama*, he concluded. *And if she's at the edge of the cliff, then that means... Oh, no.*

Simba sprinted down the hill, not even looking where he was going. Unfortunately for him, he tripped over a rock, and was sent tumbling towards the ground, grunting and groaning in pain as he bounced around. "Ow! Oh! Ow!"

He landed hard on the ground at the bottom of hill, feeling like he'd been spun around a thousand times – and then a thousand more. "I am *never* doing that again," he stated, hopping to his paws and running off again.

He raced past the den Tojo was in, and was going too fast to hear the sound of him crying his eyes out...

Tama stood at the edge of the cliff, looking down at the ground below. It had to be the tallest cliff in the Pride Lands. It was no danger to anyone, because no one ever came here. It was the most peaceful, secluded area in the kingdom. You'd only ever fall from the edge if you *wanted* to.

And that's exactly what Tama planned on doing. Her life would end as soon as she leapt from the edge. No one could ever survive a fall like that. She was guaranteed death.

Everything was going according to plan. It wouldn't be long before Simba arrived – because Tama *knew* he would work it out – and tried to rescue his precious Nala from certain death.

But it was far too late for that. Tama had already drained every last drop of Nala's energy, leaving her on the edge of life. She was slowly dying a painful death, and that only seemed to make Tama happier. For once, other people were suffering instead of her.

Once Simba got here, that was when the fun would *really* begin. She would murder him in cold blood, and then everything would be complete as she killed herself. The Pride Lands would no longer have a future King and Queen, and the kingdom would fall to pieces. That satisfied Tama. They were all going to suffer – just like she had her whole life.

Tama closed her eyes, and took a deep breath, preparing herself for the troubles to come.

One thing was certain. Things were going to get *nasty*.

Simba skidded to a halt when he got there. The whole area was filled with trees, and he couldn't tell any of them apart from each other. It looked like some kind of complicated maze. *Where am I gonna find Nala in all this?* he asked himself.

He walked in amongst the trees, keeping an eye out for her. She had to be somewhere around here. His best bet would be to try the cliff, because that's where he saw Tama. At least, that's where he *thought* he saw her.

Simba kept walking straight ahead, knowing that he had to end up at the cliff eventually. Everything was very dark. It was late in the evening, and Simba presumed that it would only be an hour or so before night arrived. He'd prefer to rescue Nala in the daytime. He didn't want to have to fight Tama in the night, where he wouldn't be able to see her.

Eventually, Simba could see the evening light in the distance, which meant that he was close. He broke into a run, and the light got closer and closer, as the number of trees decreased.

Simba hid behind the last tree he saw, peeking his head around to look at the cliff. It was an empty area. There was nothing on the ground but a bunch of small rocks and tiny stones.

His eyes slowly scanned the area. He couldn't see Tama...

But then, on the ground, he could see a lifeless body. His eyes widened when he recognised the creamy fur. *Oh, no...*

Simba rushed over to Nala's still body, cradling it in his paws. "Nala? Are you okay?" he asked her, getting no response of any kind. Her body had gone limp. She looked dead, but Simba knew she wasn't. She couldn't be dead. She just couldn't.

Putting his head to her chest, Simba listened out for a heartbeat. It was faint, and slow, but it was there. He breathed a sigh of relief. Nala was still alive. But barely. Rising to his paws, Simba knew that he had to find Tama, and end all of this before other people got hurt.

"I knew you'd come, Simba," said a voice from behind him.

Turning around quickly, Simba found himself face to face with Tama. "You," he said, pointing at her. "What have you done to Nala?"

"Killed her – basically," Tama replied, walking past him and lightly stroking the top of Nala's head. "She's such a sweet little thing, isn't she, Simba? It's a shame that I had to drain her energy."

"You *what*?" Simba exclaimed, instantly enraged.

"You heard me," said Tama. "I hypnotised her mother into giving her to me, and then all I did was bring Nala here, and then I drained her energy. Every last drop. She's dying, Simba. Slowly and painfully." She smiled. "I kind of like it."

"Reverse it," Simba ordered. "Now!"

"I wish I could, Simba," Tama replied. "Well, actually, I *can*. But I don't really want to. That'd just spoil all the fun I have in store for you."

"What are you talking about?" Simba asked. "I've never done anything to you, Tama. Why do you think we deserve this?"

"There's a very simple answer to that, Simba," Tama responded, staring into his auburn eyes. "You and Nala have everything, while I have *nothing*. All my life people have hurt me. I was born into a horrible family, with horrible parents who abused me. Ever since then, I've pretty much concluded that I mean nothing. Nobody's ever given me a second thought. So, I came up with this plan. The plan that will end all of the misery."

"And what plan is this?" said Simba, glaring at her.

"To kill you, Simba," Tama revealed. "And then, once you're out of the way—"

"You'll take over the Pride Lands," Simba concluded, nodding. "I should have known, really."

"Actually, Simba, you're wrong," Tama told him. "Once you're dead, I'm going to kill myself. You see this cliff?" She pointed to it with a claw. "I'm going to jump from the edge, and end my life. I'll die, happy that I've ruined the future of this kingdom."

"So you did it all," Simba said. "You just want to hurt people. Even Nala's mother. You almost killed her."

Tama shrugged. "So? In case it's escaped your mind, Simba, I don't really care. This is about me – *not* anyone else. It turns out that the last day of my life just so happens to be the best!"

"I won't let you do this," Simba told her firmly. "I won't let you kill me, and I'm *definitely* not going to let you kill Nala."

"It's already too late for her," Tama said, cradling Nala's body. She shook her around frantically. "See? She can't even hear you! She can't feel anything! All she *can* feel is pain! Hey – we finally have something in common!"

"Shut up!" Simba snapped, extending his claws. He was ready to fight Tama. He wouldn't just give up. If he had to kill her to save Nala, then so be it.

"You have a very commanding voice, Simba," said Tama, extending her own claws. "You would have made a very good King, but I'm afraid I have to ruin that lovely throat of yours."

"Just try it," Simba warned, baring his teeth.

Tama shrugged, and grinned. "Okay." In one swift motion, Tama slashed Simba across the chest with her claws, leaving a very deep cut. Simba cried out in pain, collapsing to the ground. "Oops. I guess I don't know my own strength."

Simba struggled to get up again, his whole chest burning with pain. His fur was covered with blood. Tama had struck him in a weak spot, and already he felt weak.

"Tired, Simba?" said Tama, grabbed him violently by the neck, strangling him. "Ah, it's a darn shame. 'Cause I'm just getting *warmed up!*"

Tama – still holding Simba by the throat – slashed him across the cheek. He winced, pulling himself away from Tama's powerful grip. With a cry of rage he leapt at her, only for Tama to simply step to the side, dodging him with ease.

Simba skidded across the ground, his whole body throbbing with pain. Tama had defeated him in just a matter of seconds.

Grinning evilly, Tama let out a maniacal laugh. "Oh, it's over, Simba! I've won!" She made her way over to him, putting her claws to his throat.

"Tama... don't do this!" Simba pleaded, a desperate look in his eyes. "You don't have to kill!"

"I have to, Simba," Tama told him. "I *have* to. If it makes you feel any better, then I'll be joining you soon."

"But you don't understand!" Simba cried. "You don't know what death is! You think you're a bad person – if you kill yourself then all you'll get is darkness! For ever!"

"Shut up!" Tama snarled, digging her claws into Simba's throat. "Just... shut... *up!*"

Simba struggled and choked, desperate to get away, but Tama had him pinned down, and showed no signs of loosening the grip she had on his throat. Her claws dug hard into his skin. Pain stabbed through his neck.

He opened his mouth, but no words came out. He just choked and gagged, as if *begging* for air.

It didn't take him long to realise that this was the end. He was going to die. Tama was going to strangle him to death, and there was nothing he could do about it.

Goodbye, Nala, he thought, as he stared into Tama's orange eyes, which burned brightly with anger.

Tama dug her claws in even deeper, determined to kill Simba. She maintained her grip on his throat. He wouldn't get away. She knew that. Tama stared at his face. She wanted to look into his eyes as he died...

And that's when Tama saw it. The unmistakable fear in Simba's eyes. The horror, the sadness, and the fear, all rolled into one. He looked so scared, so torn apart... and so *heartbroken*.

The evil sneer on Tama's face soon turned into a sad frown, and her eyes softened, no longer glaring at him with anger. *I... I can't do it*, she decided, releasing her claws from Simba's throat.

Simba gasped deeply, gulping in mouthfuls of air. Tama backed away from Simba, her eyes wide with horror. "Oh, no!" she cried, tears in her eyes. "What have I done?" She sobbed. "What have I *done?*"

Coughing and spluttering, Simba looked up at Tama, just staring at her. "You let me go," he said, surprised. "Why?"

Tama trembled, ashamed of what she had become. "I... I'm sorry," she said, before walking over to Nala, putting a paw on top of her head.

Nala's eyes snapped open and she gasped, her energy instantly returned to her. "Oh!" she exclaimed, putting a paw to her forehead. "Ow! What was that? What was...?" Nala's eyes rolled into the back of her head, and she fainted, unconscious again.

"She'll be okay," Tama assured her. "That's just the shock of having her energy given back."

Simba was stunned by this sudden turn of events. "But—"

"Don't worry," Tama interrupted, turning towards the edge of the cliff. "I won't cause any more trouble to either of you. You'll never see me again. I know what I have to do."

With that, Tama started taking slow steps towards the edge, knowing what had to be done. She was going to kill herself. She had become a monster, and she was the only one who could stop herself, before she caused any more harm. This was the only option...

"Wait!" Simba cried, his eyes wide as he realised what Tama was about to do.

But Tama didn't listen. She stood at the edge of the cliff. This was it. She took a glance at the sun, which was slowly setting. "It was a nice day today," she said, before looking down at the ground below. "I wish I could say the same about me." She smiled. "Goodbye."

Tama jumped from the edge.

"No!" Simba screamed, jumping to the edge in an attempt to save her.

But it was too late.

Tama closed her eyes as she fell, blocking out the tears in her eyes. It wouldn't be long before she hit the ground at the bottom of the cliff, which would kill her instantly. She was falling, falling, falling...

And then she wasn't.

Slowly, Tama opened her eyes, and realised that someone had caught her. Looking around, she gasped when she realised who it was.

Tojo.

He was smiling at her. "Hey."

Tama's eyes widened. "Tojo?" she said, surprised. "You... You caught me?"

He nodded, lowering her gently to the ground. "Of course I did. I couldn't just let you fall like that, could I?"

Tama stared into his bright, kind blue eyes, and then let out a sob, before breaking down in tears. "I'm so sorry!" she cried, burying her head in his chest. "I... I thought I was making everything better! But I got it all wrong!" Tama sobbed harder, unable to bear her breaking heart any longer. "You were right. I'm a monster! But it's only because... It's only because nobody loves me!" Tama hung her head low. "*I don't want to live!* I don't want to..."

Tama continued to cry, unable to deal with the pressures of life any more. In that moment, it had all suddenly become too much. She just didn't want to carry on. She wished she were dead.

Tojo stared down at her, watching her sob her heart out. She really meant it. Tama wanted to die. Nobody had ever showed her love. That was the only reason she was doing all of this. Well, it was time that things changed. "You're wrong," he told her.

Tama looked up at him, her eyes red with tears. "What?"

"You're wrong. You said nobody loves you."

"I don't understand," said Tama, confused.

Tojo stared into her orange eyes, and smiled. "I love you," he declared.

Tama gazed into his eyes, a surprised expression on her face. "You... You what?"

"I love you," Tojo repeated. "All this time you've had someone who loves you right in front of you." He chuckled. "You're a pretty ignorant girl."

Instantly, Tama's heart warmed up. She stroked the cheek she had cut him on softly. "And you're a very sweet, little cub," she told him. "I just never took the time to notice. I'm sorry, Tojo. I'm sorry for everything I've done to you. It's just that... it wasn't fair – what happened to me, I mean. It wasn't right. But... I suppose I could have been... nicer to you. Can you ever forgive me?"

"Of course I can," he replied, grinning.

"And Tojo, there's something else," Tama said. "Something I forgot to mention."

"What is it?"

"I love you too," she told him, before giving him a kiss on the muzzle. Tojo kissed her back, and they both closed their eyes, embracing each other.

Pulling away from the kiss, Tama and Tojo gazed into each other's eyes, smiling. "So where did this suddenly come from?" Tama asked. "When did you start loving me?"

"Ever since I met you."

And, for the first time in a long while, tears streamed down Tama's cheeks.

Tears of joy.

Watching Tojo and Tama from the edge of the cliff, Simba smiled. *Looks like they're back together*, he thought. *My work here is done*. Simba got to his paws, turned around and headed over to Nala, who was still unconscious.

He hoisted her onto his back. "Come on, Nala," he told her. "It's time to go home."

He started walking, knowing that everything would be all right in the end. It always would.

Tama nuzzled the side of Tojo's face, loving him with all her heart. It had taken her such a long time to find someone who loved her, but it was all worth it in the end. Her one true love was her best friend all along. It had been staring her in the face, and she never noticed.

"So, where do you want to go now?" Tojo asked, smiling at her. "Are we still staying in the Pride Lands?"

"Nah," Tama replied. "There's so much more we can see out there, Tojo. We can't just stay in one place our whole life. We should go and have our own adventures!"

"Well, where do you want to go first?"

"The second star to the right, and straight on till morning," Tama replied, a wide smile on her face.

"What?"

"Nothing. I don't know – let's just see where we end up. Come on. I'll race you there – wherever 'there' is."

Tama raced off, and Tojo chased after her, a big grin on his face. Somehow, he knew that he and Tama were going to live happily ever after.

After all, what could possibly go wrong?

"Do you think she deserved it?" Nala asked, once Simba had finished telling her the whole story about Tama.

Simba nodded. "Yeah. I do. I mean, she *was* abused by her parents. Wouldn't *you* be messed up if that happened to you?"

"It *did* today," Nala retorted, remembering how her mother had threatened to kill her earlier. "My Mom almost ended up killing me." She sighed, turning her head towards the corner of the den. "Do you think she'll be okay?"

Sarafina was curled up in the corner, bruised and battered. Her condition had improved from earlier, but she was still pretty beat up.

"She'll be fine," Simba assured her. "Trust me. Have I ever let you down?"

Nala smiled. "No. Which reminds me – thanks for saving me. *Again*. I don't know what I'd do without you."

"Thank *Tama*," said Simba. "She's the one who gave you your energy back." He brushed the tuft of fur on the top of his head back. "But hey, I *was* the one who carried you all the way back here."

Nala's eyes widened in shock, as she stared at the top of Simba's head. "Oh..."

Simba's eyes narrowed in confusion. "Nala, what's wrong? Why are you staring at me like that?"

"Simba – look!" Nala exclaimed, pointing to the top of Simba's head with a claw. "On the top of your head! Your tuft!"

"What are you...?" Simba looked upwards, and his eyes widened in surprise. "Oh... *Now* I know what you mean."

On the top of Simba's head, dangling from his golden-brown tuft, was a long, thick strand of red fur.

The End

AN: And so Series Two comes to a close. I bet you all thought Tama was going to die, didn't you? I wouldn't do that to her – especially after all she's been through. She deserved what she got in the end, and so did Tojo.

Well, that's it. My last ever story. I guess it's time for me to move on. Pursue other projects. Wear a fez. Upgrade from VHS to DVD. Write a story called *Fat Old Women*. Nah, I'm just joking about that last one. So, I guess this is goodbye...

Bah! In your dreams! Series Three – thirteen more stories. More cuteness, more action and more cliff-hangers! That's what you want, isn't it? I've had this planned for ages, anyway. You didn't think I just go, did you? I'm not going anywhere for a *long* time. So, expect a new story in a few days, because I just so happen to be *very* fast at writing these things.

So, just one more thing to ask: will you leave me a review? I could do with the motivation...

Take care,

–ThatPersonYouMightKnow

COMING SOON: Simba grows up; our two favourite heroes make a new friend; and Hago makes a shocking return...